Tips for Making Delicious Meals

Vegetables

- REPLACE butter, margarine or cheese sauce on cooked vegetables with flavored vinegar, herbs (dried or fresh) or lemon
- REPLACE canned vegetables with fresh or frozen (plain) or use low salt options
- ADD extra vegetables to homemade/canned soups or casseroles
- ADD vegetables to pasta sauces (pureed, grated or chopped)
- ADD chopped or grated vegetables to tuna/salmon/chicken salad
- ADD grated zucchini or carrots to baked products
- Grill or roast vegetables to enhance flavor
- ADD dark leafy greens, such as romaine and spinach, to salads and sandwiches
- On salads, REPLACE regular salad dressings with lower calorie versions or use vinegar and oil
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Fruits

- REDUCE sugar in home-canned fruits or jams (may require special pectin for jams)
- REPLACE high calorie snacks with canned, dried or fresh fruit
- REPLACE high calorie desserts with desserts made with fruit such as baked apples
- REPLACE sweet toppings such as syrup with fruit on cereals and pancakes
- If you drink juice choose 100% fruit juices INSTEAD OF sweetened beverages
- REPLACE fruit canned in heavy or light syrup with unsweetened canned fruit
- REPLACE fruit juice with whole or cut up fruit
- For baked products, REPLACE fat in a recipe with applesauce
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Dairy

☐ REPLACE whole milk with fat-free or low-fat milk products such as skim milk, string cheese
☐ REPLACE cream or half and half in recipes with evaporated skim milk
☐ REDUCE the amount of cheese called for in a recipe by using strong flavored cheeses such as sharp or parmesan

Protein Foods

☐ REMOVE visible fat and skin from poultry
☐ REPLACE ground beef with 90% lean beef or lean ground turkey
☐ REMOVE or drain fat from ground meat after cooking
☐ REPLACE fatty meats with lean cuts such as loin or round
☐ REMOVE fat from soups or meat broths by letting it cool and skimming fat from surface
☐ To cook meats, REPLACE frying methods with broiling, grilling, poaching, steaming and baking or roasting on a rack
☐ OMIT fat in cooking by using non-stick cookware and/or spray oil
☐ ADD cooked beans to salad such as red beans, garbanzo beans or black beans
☐ ADD pureed or mashed beans to soups as a thickener
☐ ADD beans to soups

Grains

☐ REDUCE by half (or more) the amount of fat called for in baking; replace with moisture-holding ingredients such as applesauce, plain yogurt, grated carrots or grated zucchini, depending on the recipe
☐ REDUCE sugar in baked products by ¼ to ½ cup of sugar per 1 cup flour called for in recipe
☐ When reducing sugar in baked products, ADD spices such as vanilla, almond, cinnamon or nutmeg
☐ SUBSTITUTE brown rice, wild rice, or bulgur in recipes calling for white rice.
☐ SUBSTITUTE whole wheat pasta in recipes calling for refined pasta.
☐ SUBSTITUTE whole wheat flour or oatmeal for refined flour in baking.
- REDUCE or OMIT salt when baking (except yeast breads) and preparing grains such as pastas and rice dishes
- REPLACE some or all of the white flour with whole wheat flour (or whole wheat pastry flour) in baked products.
- ADD cooked grains to salads such as barley, bulgur, brown rice or whole grain quinoa

Oils and Fats

- SUBSTITUTE vegetable oil for butter, shortening or stick margarine
- In baked products, REPLACE butter, shortening or stick margarine (1 c solid = ¾ c liquid oil, 3/4c solid = 2/3 c oil, ½ c solid = 1/3 c oil, ¼ c solid = 3 Tbsp oil, 1 Tbsp solid = 2 tsp oil)
- REDUCE by half, the amount of fat called for in most recipes

Other Healthy Cooking Tips You Want to Try